

VZCZCXRO2077
RR RUEHDBU RUEHIK RUEHLN RUEHPOD RUEHSK RUEHSL RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHNT #1011/01 1691055
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 181057Z JUN 09
FM AMEMBASSY TASHKENT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1026
INFO CIS COLLECTIVE
NATO EU COLLECTIVE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/CJCS WASHINGTON DC
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC
RUEABND/DEA HQS WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 0066
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0092
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 0271
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0259
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 0241
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TASHKENT 001011

SIPDIS
ANKARA FOR DEA CHRIS MELINK
DEPARTMENT FOR INL ANDREW BUHLER

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [EAID](#) [UZ](#)
SUBJECT: UZBEKISTAN: OFF-SHORE DEA COUNTRY ATTACHE FINALLY GRANTED
ACCREDITATION

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

¶1. (U) Summary: On June 15, the Embassy was informed orally by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the accreditation request for the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Country Attache has been approved. This is a major step forward and should usher in a new era of enhanced counternarcotics cooperation with Uzbekistan, although many bureaucratic issues must still be addressed. End summary.

Accreditation Granted at Last

¶2. (SBU) The Embassy was notified by telephone on June 15 that the application for accreditation for the DEA Country Attache, who has been based in Ankara, Turkey, was approved. No formal notification is provided in writing for such accreditation decisions, which is unusual for a country that typically requires diplomatic notes for virtually any correspondence or interaction. The next step will be for the Country Attache to travel to Uzbekistan on a temporary visa in order to submit his passport for the appropriate long-term visa and formal accreditation. This visit is proposed for June 22 - July 1 in conjunction with UNODC/OSCE precursor training events in the country, although the request for the initial visa is still in the lengthy processing phase. In Uzbekistan, accreditation is a crucial prerequisite to conducting any business, interacting with any host government officials, or traveling outside the capital city.

¶3. (SBU) Significantly, the government's decision to accredit the DEA Country Attache breaks a major logjam in our sustained efforts over the past 15 months to increase engagement on counternarcotics issues. It also definitively resolves the question - prompted by cryptic communication and prolonged silence from the Uzbek side -

about whether DEA Special Agents could officially augment the Embassy staff (the Uzbeks had suggested that generalist diplomats already assigned to Embassy Tashkent should instead liaise on counternarcotics issues).

Still More Work to be Done

¶4. (SBU) Accreditation for the Country Attache is only the first step in effectively reestablishing DEA's presence in Uzbekistan. DEA plans to assign two Special Agents to Embassy Tashkent as well as an Amcit administrative specialist. The second Special Agent has already been identified, however a request for his accreditation had intentionally not been submitted for consideration. This strategy was devised in order to appeal to the Uzbeks' oft-stated motto of "step by step" reengagement, and it also built on the numerous successful TDY trips the Country Attache made to Uzbekistan to begin building personal relationships. Moving forward, there is no guarantee the Uzbeks will approve subsequent accreditation requests.

¶5. (SBU) While an openly accredited DEA Country Attache was a major

TASHKENT 00001011 002 OF 002

goal, the Government of Uzbekistan has never specifically responded to our diplomatic note submitted in January proposing the establishment of a de facto DEA-staffed "Counternarcotics Section" at the Embassy, which would be under Chief of Mission authority and headed by the Country Attache. This was itself an alternative strategy developed after Uzbekistan officially denied a summer 2008 note seeking to establish a DEA Office at the Embassy, and we never fully understood why this was a contentious issue for the host government. Thus, while we can proceed with the assumption that we indeed have a Counternarcotics Section that will be headed by the DEA Country Attache, we will have to test the waters to see how the host government interacts with the new mission member.

¶6. (SBU) A key remaining issue is securing sufficient access to government counterparts in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the National Security Service. To operate effectively, the DEA Country Attache needs the ability to readily contact host government officials and exchange operational information in support of investigations. This type of procedural protocol is particularly onerous in Uzbekistan, and diplomats must submit diplomatic notes far in advance even to arrange working-level meetings. Pursuant to this, we are requesting a meeting with MFA and law enforcement officials to attempt to establish a satisfactory system by which the DEA can cut out the bureaucratic middlemen and talk directly with the people who work on drug investigations.

Comment:

¶7. (SBU) Obtaining accreditation for the DEA Country Attache is a major positive development and demonstrates that sustained engagement can pay dividends. In addition to the regular visits by DEA officials to Uzbekistan, the Uzbeks appreciated the recent warm reception in Washington when First Deputy Foreign Minister Karamatov visited DEA Headquarters. We believe Karamatov's personal report to President Karimov may have contributed to a breakthrough. We still do not have a full-fledged DEA office, but this positive signal should enable us to substantially deepen

cooperation on an area of mutual interest.
NORLAND